

MINUTES
BALTIMORE COUNTY *Linking Communities to the Montreal Process*
***Criteria and Indicators* PROJECT**

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, July 29, 2003
DEPRM Office, 401 Bosley Ave., Towson

Attending:

Jo Owen and Michael DeFilippi (Watershed Protection Coalition); Mel Noland and Lucy Wright (County Forestry Board); Jonathan Kays (UM Cooperative Extension); Bill Stack and Christine Duce (Baltimore City DPW); Rob Prenger (DNR); Don Outen, Pat Cornman, Wally Lippincott and Rob Hirsch (DEPRM)

Welcome and Agenda Review:

Don Outen welcomed those in attendance and opened the meeting at 10:00. Attendees introduced themselves.

It was noted that other attendees of the June 10 Forest Sustainability Issues and Indicators Forum expressed interest in participating on the Steering Committee but were unable to attend due to schedule conflicts. These included Len Wrabel (MAR-LEN Forestry), Jeff Horan and Rob Northrop (DNR), Rich Pouyat (Baltimore Ecosystem Study), Chan Robbins (USGS); and Bret Sage (DEPRM). As well, others expressed interest in working on indicators for specific Montreal Process Criteria, including David Nelson (Glatfelter Pulpwood Co.).

Review of Minutes:

N/A – This was the first meeting of the Steering Committee.

Discussion:

The focus of the meeting was establishing a process by which the County's *Linking Communities* Project could move forward from the momentum created at the June 10 Forum. Don Outen provided a brief overview of the origins of the *Linking Communities* Project for Baltimore County for the benefit of those who were not in attendance at the June 10 Forum. Handouts were also provided from the June 10 Forum, including the list of attendees; the Forum presentation summaries, exercises, and resource information prepared by Maureen Hart and Vesela Veleva of Sustainable Measures, Inc. (our Forum facilitators); County forest resource/landscape assessment data sheet; and several short excerpts on forest stewardship and sustainability news.

Don continued to describe the events that lead up to the County being invited to participate as the third US case study for the *Linking Communities* Project, the relationship of the Project as an indicators effort to other indicator programs in which DEPRM is participating (EPA's Regional Vulnerability Assessment (ReVA), and the DNR Coastal Zone Management Program's participation in national CZM performance indicators). The *Linking Communities* Project was also placed in the context of DEPRM's work over the past years with DNR on Green Infrastructure, regional reservoir watershed management (DNR's Rob Northrop/Christine Duce's work for Baltimore City DPW), and the Revitalizing Baltimore Project. Don also noted that DEPRM is aware that citizens and the forestry industry are becoming increasingly polarized over harvesting.

At several points throughout the meeting, the Committee began discussing some of the substantive issues raised at the June 10 Forum. Among the issues discussed were:

- ❑ the continued fragmentation of the County's forest resource base and relationship to the development process (Jo Owen)
- ❑ the need for education for both private and public parties about sound forest management practices (Jonathan Kays)
- ❑ the need to control deer populations (everyone)
- ❑ unnecessary restrictions on landowner's use of the renewable forest resource and the impending loss of the forestry industry in Baltimore County (Rob Prenger, Mel Noland)
- ❑ need to better educate landowners and instill a land ethic or "social responsibility" (Lucy Wright).

Steering Committee members were aware that some of these issues are not new. Several useful ideas and new information were provided, some as part of learning from others' successes and problems, including:

- ❑ the group should look at the City's experience with the Watershed Management Task Force (Michael DeFilippi)
- ❑ the group should look at the Montgomery County model for deer management, which stressed consensus and support (Jonathan Kays)
- ❑ the group should learn more about forest industry certification programs and forest management programs (Jonathan Kays, Rob Prenger, Mel Noland)

Don noted that these and many other issues were explored at the June 10 Forum, which engaged the participants throughout the day. The Forum, he noted, produced 20 major issues, 11 goals, and 44 potential indicators. As enticing as it was to continue discussing the issues, the focus was returned during each of these discussions to the challenge at hand: establishing the structure and process for addressing the Forum issues and indicators and managing the process of change.

Project management was the first management issue discussed in detail. It was noted that, unlike the Revitalizing Baltimore Project or the State's Tributary Strategies program which provided funds for project management, DEPRM is receiving no separate funding assistance at this time for continuing with the *Linking Communities* project. It is important, however, that the County has achieved a certain visibility with forest sustainability management with the US Forest Service, American Forests, MD DNR and others. These agencies and programs have funding and other assistance with which the County Project needs to continue to cultivate a relationship as progress is made and needs are identified. The association with the Montreal Process can also help achieve awareness and interest at the County level in moving toward sustainable forest resource management. Participating in the Linking Communities Project using the Montreal Process framework is an immense undertaking, but one which most Forum participants have supported as worthwhile if not crucial.

It was proposed that the Steering Committee must focus on managing the Project - making decisions about how to proceed, what additional information the Project needs, whom to involve, how to make decisions, how to communicate progress, and how to evaluate. The Steering Committee will need to meet regularly and assure that the balance of perspectives for forest resources are included. The Steering Committee needs to be small enough to provide direction, yet inclusive enough to avoid any fatal flaws in the work effort. At this time participation is open to all, and the group can decide later to limit participation and prescribe membership if desirable or necessary. Some sorting out of functions and responsibilities will

likely occur once the larger Working Group is underway. The attendees were asked to identify critical parties to be included at this point.

In addition to a Steering Committee, it was proposed that a larger Working Group of 30-50+ members be established to continue exploring and debating issues, and to make recommendations for actions and indicators. It was generally agreed that the structure of the Working Group should follow the major issues identified by the Steering Committee as the first priority of the Project. The Project needs to clearly decide what priority issues need to be addressed, using the Montreal Process Criteria as a framework, and what the role of indicators will be. Wally Lippincott offered that the Working Groups need to establish the detail outlines of work and schedules for products. The Working Group may be comprised of distinct Sub-committees, which should be free to invite participants who might only want to contribute to a specific issue or indicator.

The discussion then turned to a framework under which work on the Project should proceed. Don recommended that the Steering Committee proceed as follows:

- ☐ re-visit the key issues, goals, and indicators developed at the June 10 Forum
- ☐ formalize a vision for and define sustainable forest resource management (clearly explain what we are doing and why)
- ☐ define the structure of purpose for the indicators
- ☐ develop an approach to evaluate objectives and the development of the indicators.

The Steering Committee discussed several options for managing the Project using the framework above. Bill Stack, Wally Lippincott, Mel Noland and Jo Owen all reinforced the importance of communicating the Project vision and goals and identifying the audiences from the start. Ideas ranged from getting continuing community news coverage (Mel) to including a Project page on DEPRM's web site (Don). The Steering Committee agreed to generate some more ideas and re-visit the communications strategy as a separate discussion point at an upcoming meeting.

A good discussion also ensued about the indicators part of this. It was suggested that the indicators should serve as a tool to measure the status and change in the forest resource and how it is being managed. Indicators can be structured in different ways, as described in the Montreal Process final draft *Indicator Toolkit* document that was distributed to members of the Steering Committee. At a minimum there could be system-type indicators, possibly by sub-watershed, such as % of forest cover, a fragmentation index, etc. There can be management input and outcome indicators, such as % of private forest acres with management plans, % of forest being managed for forest-dependent wildlife, etc. The project participants need to decide how to best use the indicators, and to assure that indicators are a part of helping measure whether the goals to which we are committed are being achieved.

Decisions:

The Steering Committee decided that for this Project to succeed, the following are essential at this point:

- ☐ all interest groups that are likely to have issues with the work of the Project (such as for the deer management issue) need to be invited into the effort from the start
- ☐ the Project should outline clearly what it is about – what forest sustainability means for us, what goals the group decides to focus on, etc.
- ☐ the Project must be communicated as early in the process as possible to both citizens and decision-makers, before undertaking extensive work,

- ❑ elected officials should be encouraged to become a part of the Project and to be represented on the Steering Committee

Action Items:

In order to use the framework to continue the momentum of the June 10 Forum, members were asked to provide input within two weeks (August 12) on the following:

1. List of specific people who should be invited to join the Steering Committee and/or Working Group (some were identified at the Forum)
2. Draft a “vision” statement for the Project as it relates to sustainable forest resource management (what are we trying to accomplish?)
3. Identify the top 3 to 5 “issue categories”, using the Montreal Process Criteria, or identify the highest priority Criteria by combining any if possible
4. Provide recommendations for a communications strategy – how do we get the word out early (media and format)?

Responses on the above will be compiled by Don and distributed to the Steering Committee members before the next meeting. It was also decided that draft minutes of the Steering Committee meeting will be distributed to all Forum attendees and interested parties to keep participants informed about progress and to encourage their continued participation.

Related Announcements:

Mel Noland reported that David Nelson of Glatfelter Pulpwood has extended another invitation to conduct a tour of the municipal drinking water reservoir lands that Glatfelter manages for the City of Hanover PA. The group seemed receptive to visiting the area, and Mel noted that early Fall (September) would be the best time.

Next Meeting:]

It was recommended that we establish a “regular” meeting time and meet monthly initially. The first Tuesday of the month did not appear to cause conflicts with other standing program/project meetings. The next Steering Committee meeting was therefore set for Tuesday, September 2, from 10:00 to 12:00, location TBA. It was suggested that we might hold meetings at the Sherwood House as it can accommodate more people, has free parking, and is still close to Towson. Don will check on the availability of this meeting site.

Adjournment:

The attendees were thanked for participating, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 PM.